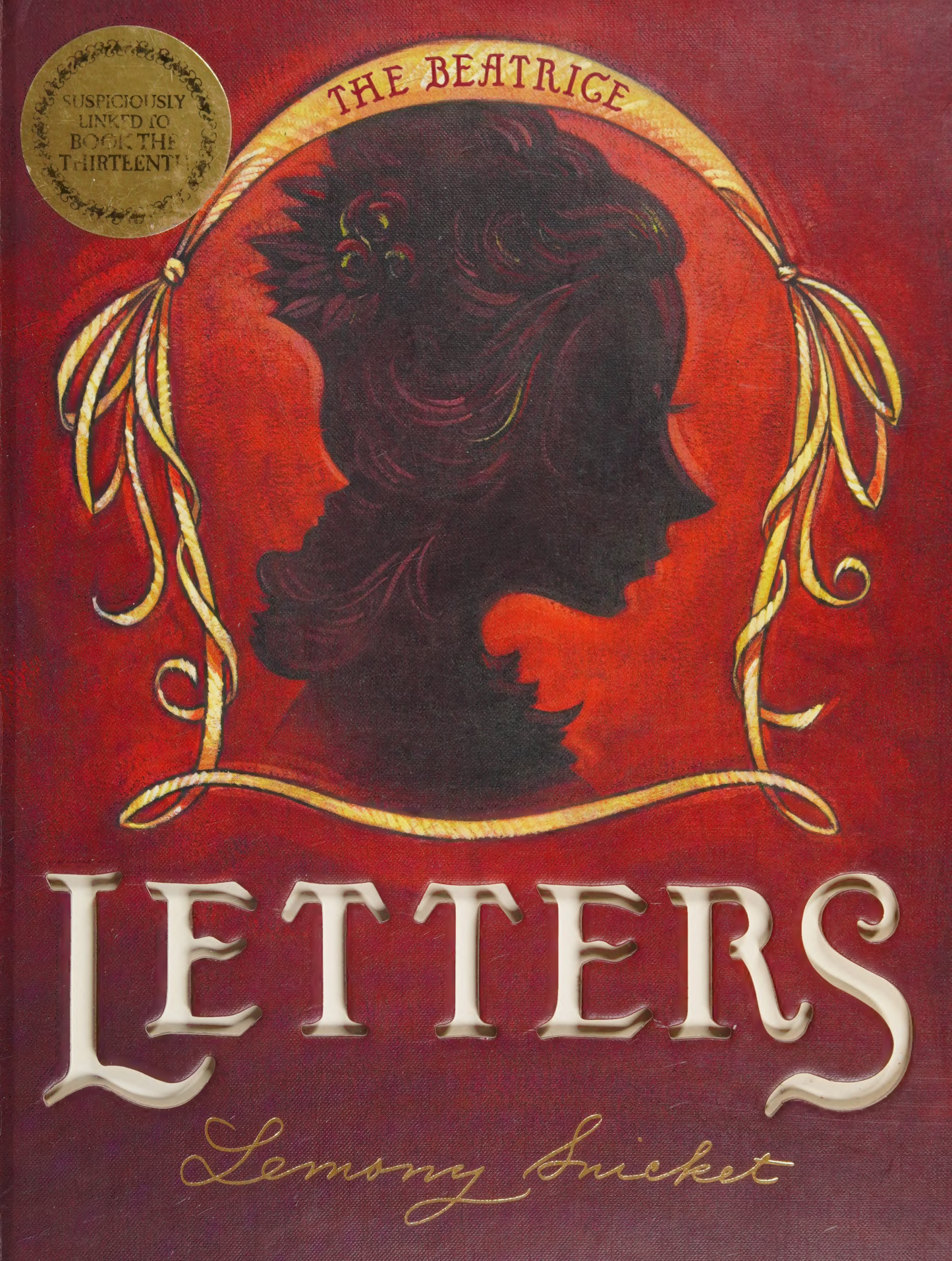

SUSPICIOUSLY
LINKED TO
BOOK THE
THIRTEENTH
THE BEATRICE
LETTERS
Lemony Snicket

A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

The Bad Beginning

The Reptile Room

The Wide Window

The Miserable Mill

The Austere Academy

The Ersatz Elevator

The Vile Village

The Hostile Hospital

The Carnivorous Carnival

The Slippery Slope

The Grim Grotto

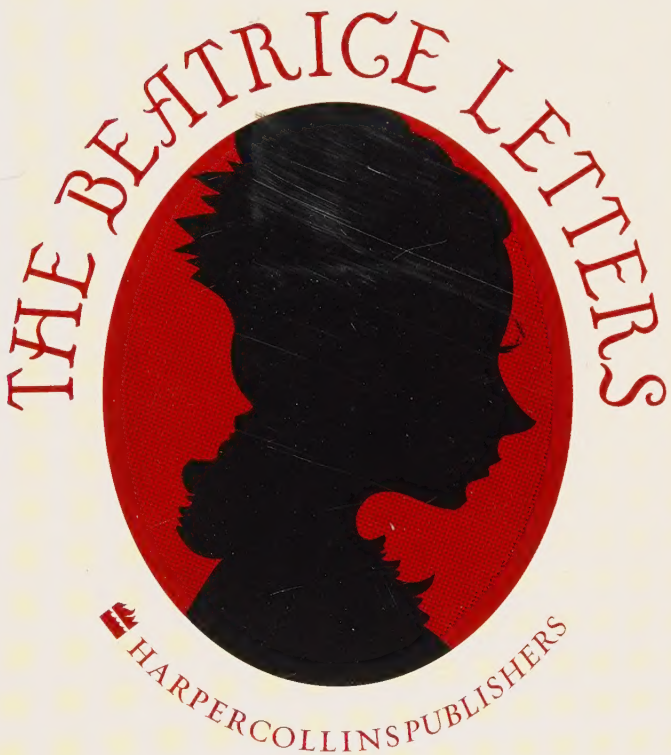
The Penultimate Peril

The End

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Lemony Snicket: The Unauthorized Autobiography

The Beatrice Letters


THE BEATRICE LETTERS
HARPERCOLLINSPUBLISHERS

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www.harperchildrens.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Snicket, Lemony.
The Beatrice letters / by Lemony Snicket ; illustrated by Brett Helquist. — 1st ed.
p. cm. — (A series of unfortunate events)
Summary: Presents a collection of correspondence between the elusive Lemony Snicket and the mysterious Beatrice.
ISBN-10: 0-06-058658-3 (trade bdg.)
ISBN-13: 978-0-06-058658-4 (trade bdg.)
1. Snicket, Lemony—Juvenile fiction. 2. Baudelaire, Beatrice (Fictitious character)—Juvenile fiction. [1. Snicket, Lemony—Fiction. 2. Baudelaire, Beatrice (Fictitious character)—Fiction. 3. Letters—Fiction. 4. Humorous stories.] I. Helquist, Brett, ill. II. Title. III. Series: Snicket, Lemony. Series of unfortunate events.
PZ7.S6795Bea 2006 2006000443
[Fic]—dc22 CIP
AC

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2 ❖ First Edition

All correspondence collected and curated for public display by
Alison Donalty and Chloë Foglia

To Beatrice
and
From Her

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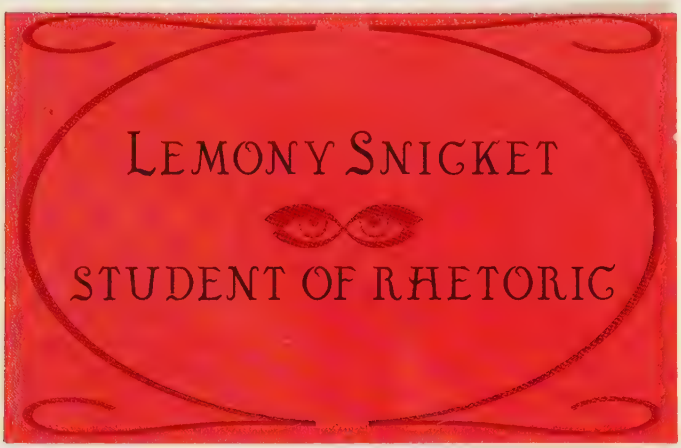
https://archive.org/details/beatriceletters0000snic

THE BEATRICE LETTERS

LS to BB #1



BB to LS #1

Wednesday

Dear Sir,

I have no way of knowing if this letter will reach you, as the distance between us is so very far and so very troublesome. This small piece of stationery must cross mountains and cafeterias, in the trunks of automobiles and in the waterproof pockets of long-distance swimmers, tucked into envelopes and folded into swans, in order to make its way to your small, dusty office on the thirteenth floor of one of the nine dreariest buildings in the city. All I can do is hope for the best, but hoping for the best, like hoping for a bat to obey your orders, almost always leads to disappointment.

And even if this letter does reach you, I am not sure it will reach the right person. Perhaps you are not who I think you are--there are many people, after all, with the same initials as you, just as there is at least one other person with the same initials as me. Perhaps you will also think I am someone else, and will make a suspicious note in the margin, accusing me of being some villainess or other.

E?

For years I kept quiet, feeling all my words twisting and tangling inside me like skeins of yarn, as I searched desperately for someone who could be of assistance. Now I must untie "My Silence Knot" and write

to a man I have never seen, even if he is not the man for whom I am looking, and even if I am looking in the wrong place for the right man, or the right place for the wrong man, or both, or neither, or both both and neither.

From what I was told, I think you may be the only person who can help me. I was told you were a sort of detective--or, at least, I was told that the word "detective" is printed on the door of your office. I was told you keep to yourself and scarcely talk to anyone, and that on the rare occasions when you engage in conversation, you never discuss your past, but can be found occasionally in a library, leafing through the theatrical sections of old newspapers. Nevertheless, I am hoping you will discuss your past with me. I am hoping you will tell me a story that began many years ago, in what I was told is a sort of classroom. I am hoping you are who I am hoping you are, and I am hoping that you are still in your dusty office, and I am hoping that this letter reaches you. In short, I am hoping for the best.

My name is Beatrice Baudelaire. I am searching for my family--Violet Baudelaire, Klaus Baudelaire, and Sunny Baudelaire. Please contact me anytime, day or night.

Beatrice Baudelaire

P.S. Day would be better because my bedtime is fairly early.

LS to BB #2

LEMONY SNICKET

Year of the Snake

Dear Beatrice,

I'm writing you this letter, as usual, for no particular reason, and I'll try to have R. deliver it to you so you can read it before we meet for fencing practice. It's easy to write letters during Code Class, as the tedious, flat-footed instructor simply mutters the same lessons about business letter writing over and over. He'll probably drone on for years and years to come.

Meanwhile, lucky people such as yourself are in Theatrics. I can hear you romping around the creaky wooden floor above me.

You and R. are probably learning how to convey coded messages in melodramatic dialogue as I write this. The only other student I know in this class is O., who is nothing but an annoyance. As I write this he is filling his notebook with anagrams of obscene words. I'm tempted to tell him there is no such thing as "a wet viper perm," but after the incident with the bottle of ink and the root beer float, I think it's better to spend my time inside "My Silence Knot" whenever that nitwit raises his ugly, one-eyebrowed head.

I'm quite excited about our upcoming excursion. I know you and R. will be climbing partners, but I hope you might join me for a few hours of cave exploration. My sister has told me that there are bats to be found there, and I would love to spend some time with a certain "baticeer." No matter where we are--far away in the mountains or downstairs in the cafeteria, swimming in the ocean or hiding in an automobile--I enjoy being together with you, and I miss you when we are not.

I miss you. See you in a few hours.

Lemony Snicket

BB to LS #2

February 28

Dear Sir,

I am writing this on the typewriter in your small, dusty office, on the thirteenth floor of one of the nine dreariest buildings of the city. It is a dull room, but there is an interesting view from the far window. If I lean back in this chair--your chair, if I'm not mistaken--I can see an empty lot in which a few unusual plants have sprouted. It takes years for the land to recuperate from a fire, but even in the darkest of ashes eventually something can grow.

You are not here, but I think I know where you are, thanks to a few clues I have discovered. For instance, thumbtacked to the east wall is an enormous map, with a path marked with yarn and stickpins. Additionally, there are notes indicating hotels, hiding places, rental car offices, synagogues, public libraries, private libraries, restaurants, cafes, all-you-can-eat buffets, and movie houses, each location marked with a date and time. Either I am a very good detective, or you are very lousy at hiding things--or you want me to come to where you are.

The wooden box on your desk marked "letters" is full of letters. But all the letters are jumbled together, and I cannot determine what the letters would spell if I put them in the proper order. The only letter missing is the one I sent you. Either it never arrived or you have taken it with you.

Please, sir, I must speak to you. I have heard rumors of your research and have dozens of questions as well as a piece or two of constructive criticism. I am leaving this city, only hours after finally seeing it for the first time, to follow your path of yarn and pins. I am heading for the hills, so that I might find, after all these years, the three siblings who are the only family I have. Without Violet, Klaus, and Sunny, I am an orphan--an orphan who is leaving this letter here, in case we miss each other.

Beatrice Baudelaire

P.S. This is a very handsome paperweight, by the way, although I cannot tell if it depicts a snake, a worm, or an electric eel.

Fig. 1. *The Paperweight*

LS to BB #3

LEMONY SNICKET

Scriabin's Anniversary

Dearest Beatrice,

At last, I have a moment to write you, as Eleanora Poe is away from the offices and so isn't looking over my shoulder. When I told the headmaster I was interested in rhetoric and thought I might enjoy volunteering at a newspaper, it never occurred to me that I'd be an assistant obituary spell-checker--and now that I find myself staring at this misspelled headline, I wish I'd followed you into the theatrical profession instead.

Madame Poe told me never to reveal any information I found before it was published in The Daily Punctilio, but I cannot help but share the obituary that lay waiting for me on my desk this morning, underneath the paperweight of the Lachrymose Leech that I. gave me as a graduation gift.

"Duchess of Winnipeg Is Deaf," it says. Just one letter can change everything.

Poor R.! I cannot imagine how sad she is to lose her mother. She's an orphan now--and the new Duchess of Winnipeg, with all of the privileges and dangers of such a position. This also means that J. will be transferred to the Financial Times, which means that G., that foolish girl, will become the new fashion editor, which means that I will probably be given the position of dramatic critic. Clearly, there are difficult times for all of us in the months ahead.

I know that at a time like this we should be thinking of our organization, and what we can do to protect our volunteers, but I can only think of you. We will have to be more careful during our

evenings together. We should stay away from open windows, even if we are outdoors, and check carefully under the bed, even if no one is sleeping in it. You should avoid suspicious foods in restaurants, particularly if they are the specialty of the house, and I should only sit on certain benches in the park when I read the sonnets you send me.

When you take your bows after Friday's performance, I will be sitting in the front row, but do not acknowledge me. As you take your bow, drop one of your hatpins off the stage. That will be your signal to me that it is safe to meet at the usual place for our midnight root beer floats. I'm sure the performance will go well, but I hope you will never have to wear that butterfly costume again.

I miss you. See you in a few days.

Lemony Snicket

Fig. 2. *The Hatpin*

K

N

BB to LS #3

4 p.m.

Dear Sir,

I have found you at last - but you're not here. The shepherds tell me that a man of your description (average height, not bald, fully clothed, with the initials L.S.) lived in the hills for a few months as "a brae-man," a phrase which here means "a man who lives in the hills." They say you rarely ventured out of a small cave - "as if you were waiting for someone," the eldest shepherd said, ringing his cowbell to call to his flock, and looking me very carefully in the eye. I traded them a ring on my finger, emblazoned with the initial of someone I believe you once knew, for a yak ride to see the cave for myself. I don't know what I will have to trade in order to have this letter sent.

Your cave is a miserable place - drafty, bat-infested, and decorated with hideous wallpaper. Whatever belongings you brought here, you took them with you when you departed - the only item I have found is the scrap of paper on which I am writing this letter. At the bottom is a single letter in what I'm told is your handwriting - yet another letter for my

collection, including the letters of your initials, the letters I found in your office, and the letters I write you, never knowing if you have received them.

This has been a hard year's journey. Except for the occasional mob, I have traveled alone, and now, after following the path you left for me in your office - if that is your office, and if you did leave your path for me, and if you are who I think you are - all I have learned is what you said when you left this cave one Wednesday night, just as the sleet season began.

"I'm in the mood for a root beer float," you said, and so am I. I will return to the city, where I've been told the best root beer floats can be found at a certain shop, although I've forgotten the shop's name, location, and price list. This is why it is so important for me to find my family. As time goes on, many memories fade. Violet tying her hair up in a ribbon, to keep it out of her eyes, Klaus squinting at a book through his glasses, Sunny appearing on the radio to discuss her recipes - I don't want these to be the only things I remember of the three most important people in my life. Please sir, contact me anytime, day or night, as I make my way to where I hope you are enjoying a refreshment.

Beatrice Baudelaire

K

R

Beatrice
This letter was mistakenly delivered to me. Clearly, the cats need better trainers!
Hope you're well. ~L

LS to BB #4

SNICKET

2 weeks after my previous letter

My darling Beatrice,

Reports are coming everywhere from Tedia to Paltryville that the performances of My Silence Knot are splendid, and that your performance as the Baticeer is the highlight of the show, even surpassing the performance of the Brae-man. More importantly, reports are coming everywhere from T. to P. that you have gathered nearly all of the evidence we need. Allow me to offer my congratulations to you and your co-star as you head to the hills for the tour's last performances.

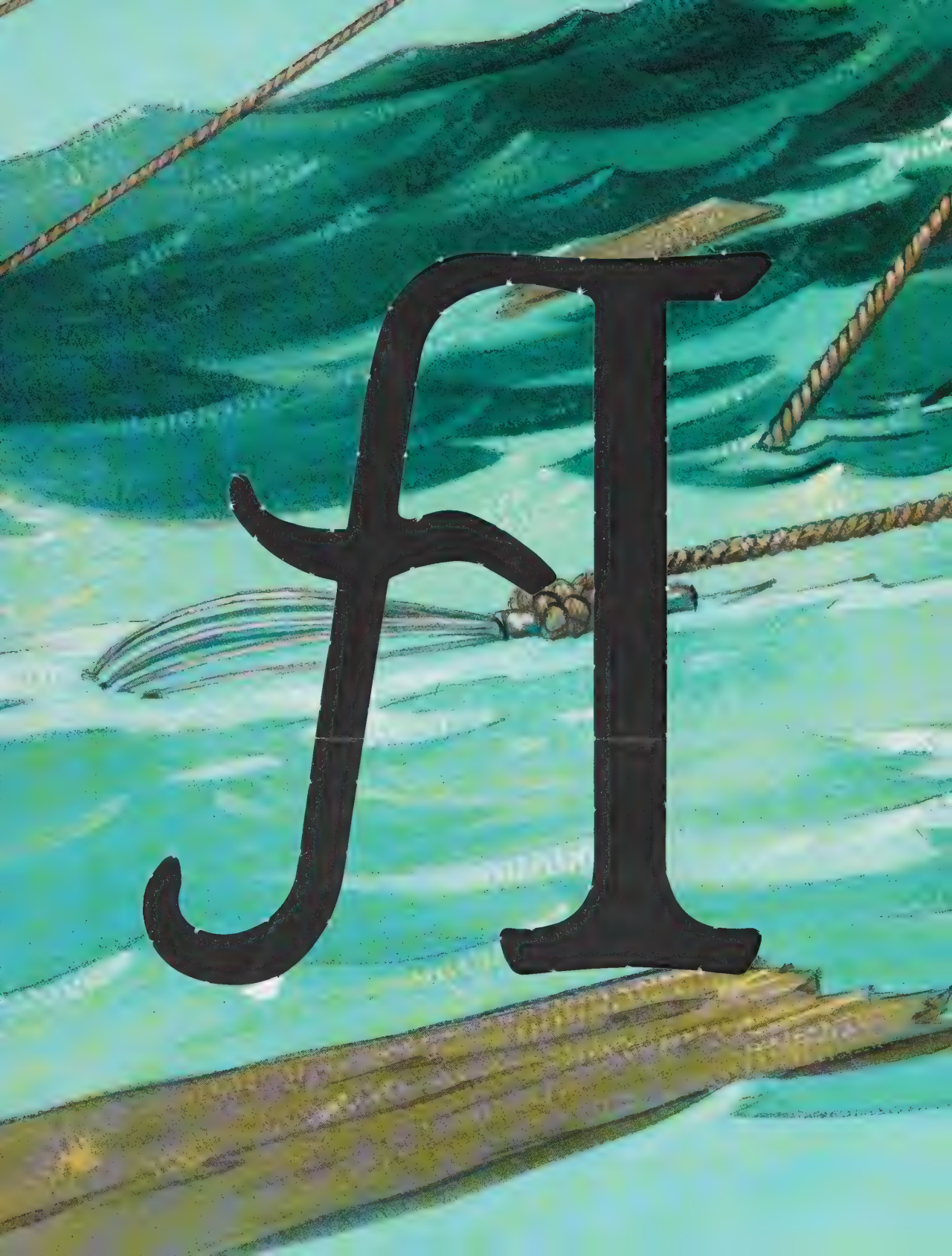
But I must admit I miss you terribly. The world is too quiet without you nearby. I go to bed early and rise late and feel as if I have hardly slept, probably because I have been reading almost the entire time. I trudge to my desk each morning, but cannot even bring myself to argue with E. or G., and in the afternoons I cannot remember to call L. "O" or to call O. "L," and in the evenings I play cards, but my mind is never on strategy but on you, so R. has won quite a bit of my pen collection. With you away, it is as if all the letters in my life are scrambled into an anagram, and I will not be able to put all the letters in order and make sense of anything until you return. I never want to be apart from you again, Beatrice, except in the restroom, at work, and when one of us is at a movie that the other does not want to see.

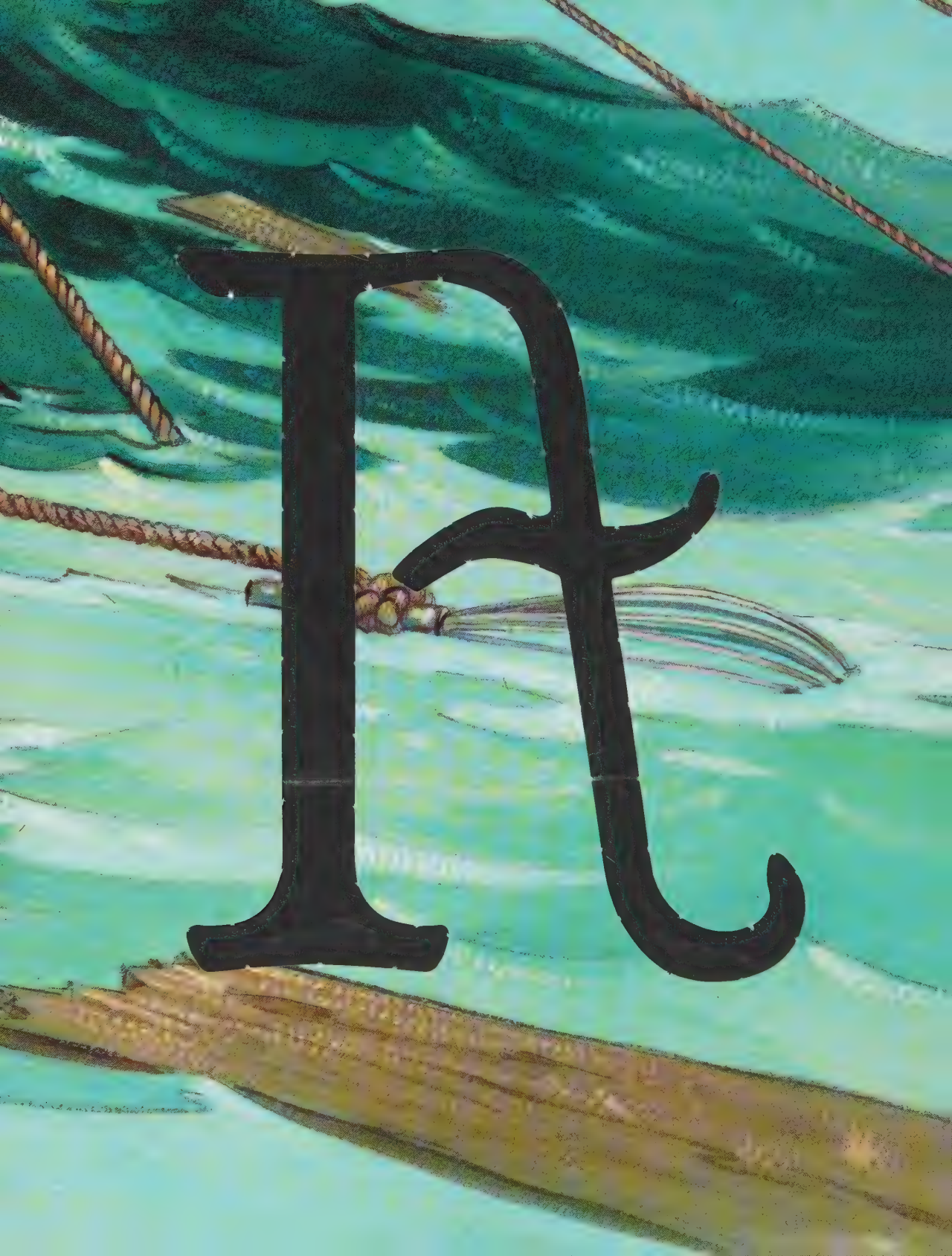
I've made a reservation at our usual place for root beer floats after your homecoming performance. There is something I very much want to ask you, but I will not do so in a letter--particularly a

letter that I am attempting to deliver via nocturnal, flying rodent. In the meantime I have included a few sonnets I have written, about the evenings we have spent together.

I miss you. See you in a few weeks.

Lemony Snicket





BB to LS #4

BEATRICE BAUDELAIRE A

Victoria Day Eve

Dear Sir,

I am writing to inquire further on the matter we discussed earlier this year. I'm in my Business Letter Writing Class, which is taught by a flat-footed man so sad and unaware that I am certain he will give me an A on this assignment without reading anything but the first sentence of each paragraph. I could say anything here at all. For instance: A "baticeer" is a person who trains bats. I learned that in a poem I watched you read.

After careful consideration, I am pleased to enclose the following information. That was me, knocking on your office door yesterday evening. I know you were inside, because I followed you from the library, where you stood for nearly an hour staring into a glass case containing old documents on display for the "Staged Poetry: Sonnets by Actors & Actresses" exhibit. Afterward, you sat on a bench in the park, examining a ring etched into the surface of the wood by someone careless with their drinking glass, before strolling along the edge of a nearby pond before suddenly making a mad dash for Doldrum Drive, where a bus was just pulling

away. You caught the bus, while I managed to flag down a rickshaw in order to follow you through the tiresome streets of the tedious district in which your dreary building can be found. By the time I managed to pick the lock on the front door, you were already several floors ahead of me on the stairs, but I could hear you wheezing from the climb by the time I reached your door. Why didn't you answer? Why won't you answer any of my questions? I must have at least twelve.

In closing, please do not hesitate to contact me at your earliest convenience. Just one letter can change everything. The three Baudelaires may be long gone, but there is a fourth Baudelaire here, waiting for you to untie "My Silence Knot" and help me find the end of a story that began with you--in the very room where I sit now, about to hand this letter to my business letter writing instructor so he will grade it and mail it.

Yours in business,

Beatrice Baudelaire

Beatrice Baudelaire

LS to BB #5

Dusk

My dearest darling,

I received all two hundred pages of your book explaining why you cannot marry me, and I gave the carrier pigeons as much seed as they could eat, and I brushed their feathers with my trembling fingers, and bathed their beaks in my tears. I had to read the book three and a half times before I could untie "My Silence Knot" and write to you.

Enclosed please find a lock of your hair, which I am returning to you, as you returned the item I slipped on your finger that night, as the waiters put the chairs up on the tables to signal that the cafe was closed, and waited impatiently for us to slurp the last tiny puddle of compressed yeast, sugar, sassafras, hops, juniper berries, dandelion root, wintergreen, carbonated water and melting vanilla ice cream. The two-hundred-page letter broke my heart, but my heart shattered at the sight of the ring. Are you aware that it belonged to R.'s dear departed mother? You should have recognized the "R" emblazoned in the center. I'm certain she would have wanted you to keep it, even if your intent to marry me has changed, thanks to our classmate Co-

I won't stain this letter with his name. The brightest star cannot shine through a cloud of dark smoke, and O. is the darkest of clouds I have seen in our skies. One day the world will know of his treachery and deceit, of his crimes and hygiene, but that's far too late for us. Ring, hair, letters, photographs--all traces of our love will be scattered then, like an anagram from one of our code lessons.

In closing, I will try to answer the thirteen questions you asked me on page 189. After reading your book, I understand why you cannot live with me. I hope, after reading the answers below, you understand why I

cannot live without you.

Question One: No.

Question Two: Of course I remember. You stepped into that enormous room of green wood. You were early for our first class, as was I. I have always believed, long before it was taught to me, that showing up early is one of the signs of a noble person, and I embarrassed you by telling you that, in front of R. and B. and the others.

Question Three: Absolutely not.

Question Four: No, I don't think so. I remember the performance, of course, and I remember your splendid costume, and I remember the hatpin you dropped off the stage, and I remember the argument I had with Eleanora Poe the next morning, when I was more than an hour late in turning in my theatrical review, but I don't remember anything about the theatrical program. If I held a program I don't remember opening it. If I opened it I don't remember seeing a poem. If I saw a poem I don't remember reading it, and if I read it I don't remember rereading it, and if I reread it I don't remember being puzzled or continuing to be puzzled. In short, I'm puzzled.

Question Five: Three children.

Question Six: "A man who lives in the hills."

Question Seven: "A man or woman who trains bats."

Question Eight: "The scrambling of letters in a word, name, or phrase in order to make a new word or phrase."

Question Nine: Always. Continuously. With increasing apprehension, and decreasing hope. I will love you with no regard to the actions of our enemies or the jealousies of actors. I will love you with no regard to the outrage of certain parents or the boredom of certain friends. I will love you no matter what is served in the world's cafeterias or what game is played at each and every recess. I will love you no matter how many fire drills we are all forced to endure, and no matter what is drawn upon the blackboard in blurry, boring chalk. I will love you no matter how many mistakes I make when trying to reduce fractions, and no matter how difficult it is to memorize the periodic table. I will love you no matter what your locker combination was, or how you decided to spend your time during study hall. I will love you no matter how your soccer team performed in the tournament or how many stains I received on my

cheerleading uniform. I will love you if I never see you again, and I will love you if I see you every Tuesday. I will love you if you cut your hair and I will love you if you cut the hair of others. I will love you if you abandon your baticeering, and I will love you if you retire from the theater to take up some other, less dangerous occupation. I will love you if you drop your raincoat on the floor instead of hanging it up and I will love you if you betray your father. I will love you even if you announce that the poetry of Edgar Guest is the best in the world and even if you announce that the work of Zilpha Keatley Snyder is unbearably tedious. I will love you if you abandon the theremin and take up the harmonica and I will love you if you donate your marmosets to the zoo and your tree frogs to M. I will love you as the starfish loves a coral reef and as kudzu loves trees, even if the oceans turn to sawdust and the trees fall in the forest without anyone around to hear them. I will love you as the pesto loves the fetuccini and as the horseradish loves the miyagi, as the tempura loves the ikura and the pepperoni loves the pizza. I will love you as the manatee loves the head of lettuce and as the dark spot loves the leopard, as the leech loves the ankle of a wader and as a corpse loves the beak of the vulture. I will love you as the doctor loves his sickest patient and a lake loves its thirstiest swimmer. I will love you as the beard loves the chin, and the crumbs love the beard, and the damp napkin loves the crumbs, and the precious document loves the dampness in the napkin, and the squinting eye of the reader loves the smudged print of the document, and the tears of sadness love the squinting eye as it misreads what is written. I will love you as the iceberg loves the ship, and the passengers love the lifeboat, and the lifeboat loves the teeth of the sperm whale, and the sperm whale loves the flavor of naval uniforms. I will love you as a child loves to overhear the conversations of its parents, and the parents love the sound of their own arguing voices, and as the pen loves to write down the words these voices utter in a notebook for safekeeping. I will love you as a shingle loves falling off a house on a windy day and striking a grumpy person across the chin, and as an oven loves malfunctioning in the middle of roasting a turkey. I will love you as an airplane loves to fall from a clear blue sky and as an escalator loves to entangle expensive scarves in its mechanisms. I will love you as a wet

paper towel loves to be crumpled into a ball and thrown at a bathroom ceiling and an eraser loves to leave dust in the hairdos of people who talk too much. I will love you as a cufflink loves to drop from its shirt and explore the party for itself and as a pair of white gloves loves to slip delicately into the punchbowl. I will love you as a taxi loves the muddy splash of a puddle and as a library loves the patient tick of a clock. I will love you as a thief loves a gallery and as a crow loves a murder, as a cloud loves bats and as a range loves braes. I will love you as misfortune loves orphans, as fire loves innocence and as justice loves to sit and watch while everything goes wrong. I will love you as a battlefield loves young men and as peppermints love your allergies, and I will love you as the banana peel loves the shoe of a man who was just struck by a shingle falling off a house. I will love you as a volunteer fire department loves rushing into burning buildings and as burning buildings love to chase them back out, and as a parachute loves to leave a blimp and as a blimp operator loves to chase after it. I will love you as a dagger loves a certain person's back, and as a certain person loves to wear daggerproof tunics, and as a daggerproof tunic loves to go to a certain dry cleaning facility, and how a certain employee of a dry cleaning facility loves to stay up late with a pair of binoculars, watching a dagger factory for hours in the hopes of catching a burglar, and as a burglar loves sneaking up behind people with binoculars, suddenly realizing that she has left her dagger at home. I will love you as a drawer loves a secret compartment, and as a secret compartment loves a secret, and as a secret loves to make a person gasp, and as a gasping person loves a glass of brandy to calm their nerves, and as a glass of brandy loves to shatter on the floor, and as the noise of glass shattering loves to make someone else gasp, and as someone else gasping loves a nearby desk to lean against, even if leaning against it presses a lever that loves to open a drawer and reveal a secret compartment. I will love you until all such compartments are discovered and opened, and until all the secrets have gone gasping into the world. I will love you until all the codes and hearts have been broken and until every anagram and egg has been unscrambled. I will love you until every fire is extinguished and until every home is rebuilt from the handsomest and most susceptible of woods, and until every criminal is

handcuffed by the laziest of policemen. I will love you until M. hates snakes and J. hates grammar, and I will love you until C. realizes S. is not worthy of his love and N. realizes he is not worthy of the V. I will love you until the bird hates a nest and the worm hates an apple, and until the apple hates a tree and the tree hates a nest, and until a bird hates a tree and an apple hates a nest, although honestly I cannot imagine that last occurrence no matter how hard I try. I will love you as we grow older, which has just happened, and has happened again, and happened several days ago, continuously, and then several years before that, and will continue to happen as the spinning hands of every clock and the flipping pages of every calendar mark the passage of time, except for the clocks that people have forgotten to wind and the calendars that people have forgotten to place in a highly visible area. I will love you as we find ourselves farther and farther from one another, where once we were so close that we could slip the curved straw, and the long, slender spoon, between our lips and fingers respectively. I will love you until the chances of us running into one another slip from slim to zero, and until your face is fogged by distant memory, and your memory faced by distant fog, and your fog memorized by a distant face, and your distance distanced by the memorized memory of a foggy fog. I will love you no matter where you go and who you see, no matter where you avoid and who you don't see, and no matter who sees you avoiding where you go. I will love you no matter what happens to you, and no matter how I discover what happens to you, and no matter what happens to me as I discover this, and no matter how I am discovered after what happens to me happens to me as I am discovering this. I will love you if you don't marry me. I will love you if you marry someone else--your co-star, perhaps, or Y., or even O., or anyone Z. through A., even R.--although sadly I believe it will be quite some time before two women can be allowed to marry--and I will love you if you have a child, and I will love you if you have two children, or three children, or even more, although I personally think three is plenty, and I will love you if you never marry at all, and never have children, and spend your years wishing you had married me after all, and I must say that on late, cold nights I prefer this scenario out of all the scenarios I have mentioned. That, Beatrice, is how I will love you even as the world goes on its wicked way.

Question Ten: No.

Question Eleven: Everything. A letter may be coded, and a word may be coded. A theatrical performance may be coded, and a sonnet may be coded, and there are times when it seems the entire world is in code. Some believe that the world can be decoded by performing research in a library. Others believe that the world can be decoded by reading a newspaper. But in my case, the only thing that made sense of the world was you, and without you the world will seem as garbled and tragic as a malfunctioning typewrite9.

Question Twelve: See the answer to question five. Kit, Jacques, and myself.

Question Thirteen: "I'm sorry, I cannot answer this last question."

I miss you. Who knows when I will see you?

Lemony Snicket

Fig. 3. *The Lock of Hair*

BB to LS #5

BEATRICE BAUDELAIRE

Midway through the Days of Awe

Dear Sir,

If you are in your office--and I hope that you are, as I can hear someone below me pacing across your creaky wooden floor--you could simply walk out the door, head down the corridor toward the east staircase, walk up one flight of stairs, head down a corridor, and knock on the door of the office directly above yours, you would find me here, sitting at my typewriter. But you won't. For one thing, you have a lousy sense of direction, and you might not know which way is east. For another, you clearly don't want to talk to me.

Violet told me once that I saved her life, and Klaus claimed that without me he would have died in despair not long after the destruction of the Hotel Denoument. Even Sunny said that she could not have survived without me. But I don't have to tell you how brave and resourceful, how loyal and well-read those three people are. It is I who would have been lost without them. Without Violet's emergency repairwork, I never would have found my way to the city to search for you. Without Klaus's notes on mountain climbing, I never

would have left the city to search for you again. Without Sunny's extensive knowledge of making snacks from wildflowers and weeds, I never would have found the strength to return once more, first by yak, then by foot, and then by yak-foot, to wind my way back to the city in the hopes of finally meeting you face-to-face. And without the stories all three siblings told me of their troubles--which in some cases differ wildly from your own accounts--I never would have found the secretarial school, where I wrote my previous letter to you. It was not a secretarial school, of course--not really--but I had to sit through that tedious business letter writing class before they would believe the name I gave the vice principal upon my arrival. Without Violet, Klaus, and Sunny I never would have continued my studies with these last few volunteers, and become the "baticeer" I am today. I owe my life to them, and now that we have been separated, I will not rest until I find them again.

I have set up shop here, in the office directly above yours. In a few moments I will drill a small hole in the floor, with the spiky metal tool given to me by my last instructor before she had to head to the hills herself, in search of other orphans, and to escape from other enemies. You must have such an item yourself--in fact all of us, hopefully, are given one or two useful items before our instructors vanish and leave us all alone in the world. I will roll this piece of paper into a tiny tube, and let it fall from my hands through the

hole. According to my calculations, it should bounce off the blades of the ceiling fan, and unfurl in midair, falling gently onto the surface of your desk like a bat after a long evening's hunting. Please answer this letter. Please contact me anytime, day or night, preferably day. I cannot imagine why someone as noble as yourself--assuming, once more, that you are the man I believe you to be--will not meet someone who wants so very much to talk to you. Please, sir, I beg of you, simply walk out the door, head down the corridor toward the east staircase, walk up one flight of stairs, head down a corridor, and knock on the door of the office directly above yours, and untie "My Silence Knot."

Beatrice Baudelaire

Fig. 4. *The Metal Tool*

NOCTURNAL PHONOGRAPHIC TELEGRAMMATIC CORPs.

NIGHT LETTERGRAM

"In spite of language, in spite of intelligence and intuition and sympathy, one can never really communicate anything to anybody."
ALDOUS HUXLEY, COLLECTED ESSAYS

RECEIVED AT

LS to BB #6

DELIVERY NO.

Late Summer

INDEPENDANT COMPETITIVE PROGRESSIVE

DEAR MRS. BAUDELAIRE,

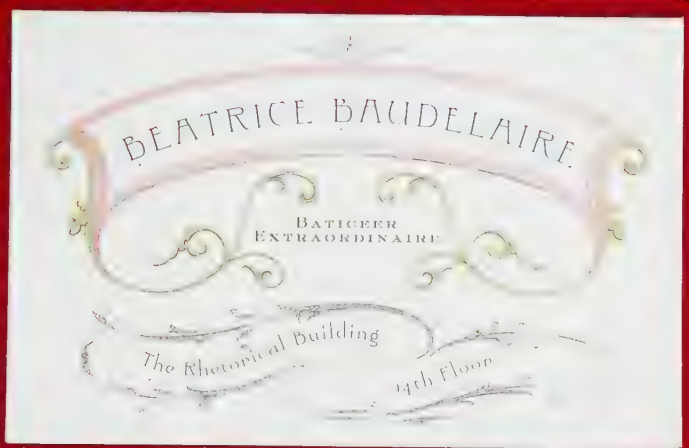
I HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING IF THIS TELEGRAM WILL REACH YOU, AS THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US IS SO VERY FAR AND SO VERY TROUBLESOME STOP THIS TELEGRAM MUST TRAVEL THROUGH WIRES THAT MAY BE SNIPPED, BURNT, RUSTED, DROWNED, OR OTHERWISE SABOTAGED--AS SNIPPED, BURNT, RUSTED, DROWNED, OR OTHERWISE SABOTAGED AS THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE STOP

I UNDERSTAND YOU AND YOUR HUSBAND ARE STILL ALIVE, AND RUMORS HAVE REACHED ME OF YOUR PREGNANCY STOP I HOPE YOU HAVE A HEALTHY BABY GIRL--A GIRL WITH ALL YOUR INTELLIGENCE, CHARM, RESOURCEFULNESS, AND PLEASANT FACIAL FEATURES, WHO WILL SOMEDAY SPEND A FEW HAPPY HOURS ALONE WITH SOMEONE SHE LOVES, UP IN THE MOUNTAINS WHERE PEOPLE OF IMAGINATION AND INTEGRITY CAN STILL GATHER, JUST AS WE DID, SO LONG AGO STOP IF NOT, I HOPE YOU HAVE A HEALTHY BABY BOY, OR PERHAPS TWINS STOP

FORGIVE ME FOR CONTACTING YOU ONE LAST TIME STOP AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, I KNOW HOW DANGEROUS IT IS, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING YOU MUST KNOW STOP IT IS SOMETHING SO DANGEROUS AND SO TERRIBLE THAT I AM TAPPING OUT THE MORSE CODE INTO THIS TELEGRAM DEVICE AS HARD AS I CAN, SO THE MESSAGE WILL BE PRINTED IN ENORMOUS TYPE STOP I CAN ONLY PRAY THAT THE SIZE OF THE MESSAGE WILL NOT BREAK THE DEVICE AND STOP THE TRANSMISSION STOP I CAN ONLY HOPE FOR THE BEST, JUST AS YOU HOPED, SO MANY YEARS AGO, FOR A BAT TO OBEY YOUR ORDERS STOP

THE MESSAGE IS AS FOLLOWS:

BB to LS #6


BEATRICE BAUDELAIRE
BATICEER
EXTRAORDINAIRE
The Rhetorical Building
14th Floor

THE BEATRICE LETTERS

Today

To My Kind Editor,

As you know, it is not easy breaking into a warehouse. One never knows if the warehouse owner posted signs reading "Beware of Dog" just to frighten prowlers, or if there is really a vicious dog nearby, or if "Dog" is merely the owner's nickname for a deep pit, and it is most disconcerting to find that you have brought steaks marinated in sleeping potion when you should have brought a sturdy pair of folding stilts, or vice versa. Once inside the warehouse, one can only hope that it has been organized sensibly--otherwise it may take all night just to find the room in which documents from long-ago library exhibitions are stored, and all morning to find the proper file. I looked under "Staged Poetry." I looked under "Poetry, Staged." I looked under "Sonnets by Actors & Actresses." I looked under "Actors & Actresses, Sonnets by." I looked under "Fourteen-Line Poems." I looked under "Theatrical Exhibitions." I looked under "Exhibitions Involving Theatricality." I looked under "Drama." I looked under "Melodrama." I looked under "Melanoma." I looked under the floorboards.

Finally, it occurred to me to look under the name of the poet. It is something that should have occurred to me much earlier, but some of the simplest things in life are the most difficult to imagine. Because I loved her so much, for instance, it never occurred to me that there could be more than one Beatrice Baudelaire. It was quite some time before I received the first of Beatrice Baudelaire's letters that I realized that all of Beatrice Baudelaire's letters could be found not just in the first Beatrice Baudelaire but in the second Beatrice Baudelaire and that perhaps if I gathered the remaining letters of the first Beatrice Baudelaire with the first letters of the remaining Beatrice Baudelaire, then the Beatrice letters could

explain the Beatrice letters and even the letters of Beatrice, no matter which letters they are, and no matter what order the letters are in. I immediately began work on the file.

And now, after all this time, I have found the same scrap of paper I had once examined in a glass case--and, years before that, examined in a hallway of the library, with the scrap of paper in the glass case. Sadly, this missing sonnet is like a missing sock--it had been lost for so long that everything else has completely unravelled in its absence. For many years I thought if I collected all these ~~letters and their accompanying ephemera--a phrase which here means~~ "documents and items which I feared had vanished, and may soon vanish again"--I could put all of them in the proper order, as if solving an anagram by putting all of the letters in the right order. But letters are not letters, so the arrangement of letters is not as simple as the arrangement of letters, and even if it were, the arrangement of these letters could spell more than one thing, just as there is more than one Beatrice, and so the mystery could become two mysteries, and each of these mysteries could become two mysteries, until the whole world is engulfed in mysteries, as it is now. No matter what documents you investigate, and what objects you retrieve, you may never answer the questions that are most important to you, but nevertheless, sooner or later you must finish whatever file you have begun.

This file is finished--just when I thought it might finish me. I cannot stare at these papers any longer, or run my hands along the ink, as my eyes are filled with tears and my fingers are stained and paper-cut. The secrets contained here are like all secrets--dangerous to those who discover them and harmless to those who fail to notice them. For this reason, I recommend that you either destroy this file or make as many copies as possible.

I do not know when I will write you again. I do not dare even to write my initial at the bottom of this letter, as so many letters have

been lost. Strange as it may seem, I still hope for the best, even though the best, like an interesting piece of mail, so rarely arrives, and even when it does it can be lost so easily.

With all due respect,

My Silence Knot

A poem about a play about a story of two people who
written by the person in the story (in the play in the poem) who

My silence knot is tied up in my hair,
As if to keep my love out of my eyes.
I cannot speak to one for whom I care.
A hatpin serves as part of my disguise.

In the play, my role is baticeer,
A word which here means "person who trains bats."
The audience may feel a prick of fear,
As if sharp pins are hidden in their hats.

My co-star lives on what we call a brae.
His solitude might not be just an act.
A piece of mail fails to arrive one day.
This poignant melodrama's based on fact.

The curtain falls just as the knot unties,
The silence broken by the one who dies.

ROUTING SLIP

TO

My Kind Editor

✓	CONTAINS LETTERS TO BEATRICE	✓	FOR YOUR INFORMATION
✓	CONTAINS LETTERS FROM BEATRICE	✓	FOR YOUR SIGNATURE
✓	CONTAINS LETTERS RE: BEATRICE	✓	WRITTEN ENTIRELY IN CODE
✓	CONTAINS SONNET(S)	✓	PLEASE DESTROY
✓	ENTIRELY WRITTEN IN CODE	✓	PLEASE MAKE NUMEROUS COPIES
✓	APPROVAL	✓	MAY CONTAIN CLUES
✓	DISAPPROVAL	✓	MEET ME AT THE ARRANGED SPOT

Top secret—only for readers deeply interested in the Baudelaire case. How I pity those readers.

With all due respect,

Lemony Snicket

DATE BB

RE: Penance

HARPERCOLLINS*PUBLISHERS*
WWW.LEMONYSNICKET.COM
COVER ART © 2006 BY BRETT HELQUIST

US $19.99 / $25.99 CAN
ISBN-13: 978-0-06-058658-4
ISBN-10: 0-06-058658-3
51999
9 780060 586584

P7-CLC-344